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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Carcieri Releases Rhode Island Test Scores Improvements Made Across State, Among All Student Groups for Second Straight Year

For the second straight year, state test scores for elementary-school and middle-school students improved on a statewide level, according to test results released this morning (Feb. 4th, 2008) by Governor Donald L. Carcieri.

Results of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) tests administered last October to all students in grades 3 through 8 showed that 65 percent of the students were proficient in reading (up 3 percentage points), 54 percent were proficient in mathematics (up 1 point), and 48 percent were proficient in writing (up 1 point).

“Since I took office, I’ve made it a priority to improve education in our state,” said Governor Carcieri. “We are making progress, and the good news we have to share today underscores that point. We should all be very proud that we have seen significant improvement in student achievement at each of these grade levels, among all student groups including disadvantaged and minority students, and in nearly all school districts. Some of our strongest gains are in our urban districts and in our Charter Schools. I want to acknowledge the hard work of all of our teachers, administrators, students, and parents who helped bring us to where we stand today.”

“I am particularly pleased that these improvements in test scores are seen across the whole state, including our urban school districts,” said Robert G. Flanders, Jr., Esq., Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education. “I am also pleased to note that, with the significant improvements this year, we are keeping pace with the two other states in our testing system, New Hampshire and Vermont. We hope to see improvements going forward in our high schools as well. Obviously, however, we still have a long way to go, particularly in the math and writing results.”

“Last year we noted that a two-year improvement does not make a trend. It is encouraging this year to see a sustained improvement over a three-year span,” said Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “Being serious about standards and expectations, about curriculum, about support for teachers, and about professional development is clearly making a difference in student results.”

Over the three-year span that the tests have been administered, Rhode Island students gained 6 points in reading and 4 points in mathematics. Writing scores have declined by 3 points, though the Rhode Island writing scores have matched or surpassed the scores in New Hampshire and Vermont.

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The gains in the test scores were seen at all grade levels and in virtually all school districts, with the some of the strongest gains in the urban districts and in most charter schools:

District	Reading	Mathematics
Central Falls	+9 points	+10 points
Pawtucket	+7	+4
Providence	+9	+5
Woonsocket	+7	+2

Charter Schools

CVS Highlander	+5	+7
Compass	+12	+17
International	+20	+3
Kingston Hill	+23	no change
Learning Community	+5	+3

The gains in test scores were also seen in all student groups:

Student Group	Reading	Mathematics
White	+6	+3
Hispanic	+10	+6
Black	+11	+7
Asian	+10	+6
Students in Poverty	+9	+5
Students with Disabilities	+5	+2
English-language Learners	+8	+5

Over the past three years, reading scores at all grade levels have improved and mathematics scores have improved at all grade levels except grade 8, where the percent proficient has remained steady.

The NECAP test was developed and administered in partnership with New Hampshire and Vermont, the only multistate testing initiative in the nation. Scores in New Hampshire and Vermont have also improved. Rhode Island improvements have outpaced those in Vermont.

In October, high-school students (grade 11) took the NECAP tests for the first time. The results of the high-school tests will be released at the end of the month.

Over the next few months, staff members of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) will use these test results to determine the 2008 school-performance classifications.

Reports on the tests results are posted on the RIDE Web site:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/NECAP.aspx>

See under “NECAP results.”